



MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Lincoln County Shooting Complex Expansion

2. Type of Proposed Action:

Lincoln County proposes to improve and expand the Lincoln County Shooting Complex (LCSC) by adding 12 new 100-yard rifle shooting bays with benches.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

The LCSC is located approximately six miles south of Libby, Montana, on Farm to Market Road; Lat. 48.2151, Long. -115.2901; Section 7, Township 29 North, Range 30 West.

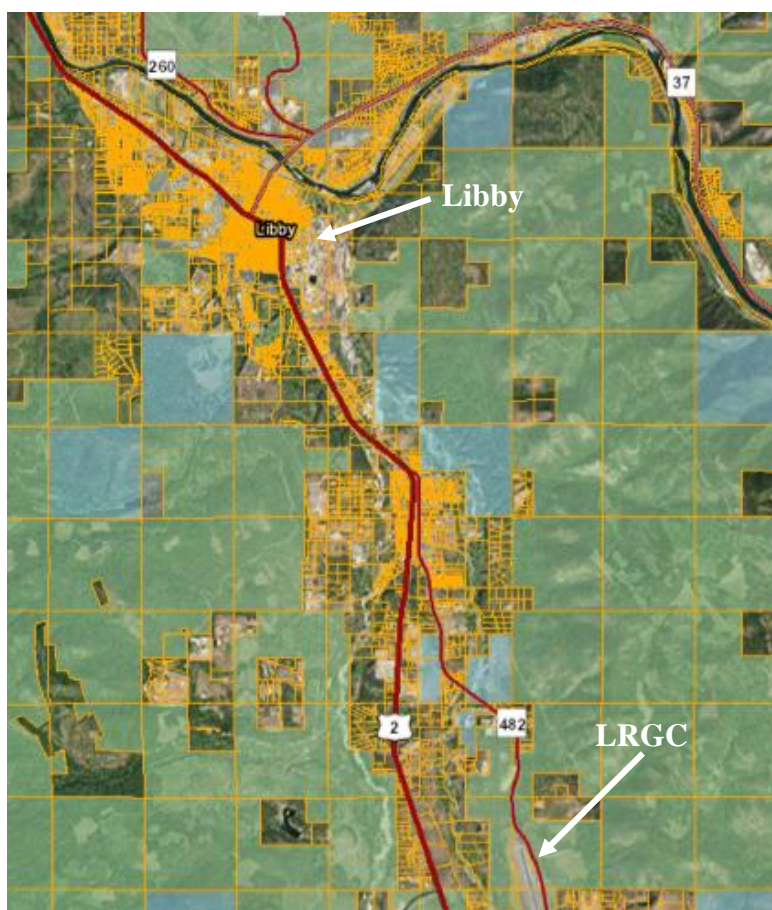


Figure 1 – Location of Lincoln County Shooting Complex, Libby, Montana



Figure 2 – Aerial view of Lincoln County Shooting Complex, Libby, Montana



Figure 3- Approximate Location of Lincoln County Shooting Complex Expansion, Libby, Montana

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA 87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) and MCA 87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

- (a)(i) Shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;*
 - (ii) May not limit the number of members;*
 - (iii) May charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and*
 - (iv) Shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or*
- (b) Shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.*

5. Need for the Action(s):

Currently, there are seven bays with benches of varying target distances of 50-, 100-, 200-, 300-, and 400-yards, with the 100- and 150-yard targets used the most frequently. Many shooters like to sight their rifles to those longer distances, which can result in those shooting at closer targets waiting and causing a backlog of people waiting to shoot. This new project will create 12 new 100-yard shooting targets adjacent to the existing rifle range and separate from the other varied-target ranges. This will increase down-range safety and lessen waiting times to acquire bench- shooting space while meeting the increasing demand from club members and the general public. This project effectively increases the size of the Lincoln County Shooting Complex from its current size of 31 acres to 36 acres, expanding the overall size by five acres.

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

The goal of the proposed project is to expand and improve the safety of the LCSC by adding 12 new 100-yard rifle shooting bays with benches.

7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

The proposed project would involve approximately 4.9 acres of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) land and will increase the size of the LCSC from 31 to approximately 36 acres.

8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):

Lincoln County obtained a 20-year Special Use Permit from the Kootenai National Forest on May 23, 2003 effective through December 31, 2022 on 31 acres for the purpose of establishing a Shooting Range. The property is not located within a floodplain and there are no permanent surface waters or wetlands on the property. The range offers shooting opportunities for rifle, pistol, shotgun, archery, and black powder.

9. Description of Project:

Lincoln County plans to improve and expand the LCSC by adding 12 new 100-yard rifle shooting bays with benches adjacent to the existing rifle range. Proposed expenses include:

1.	Concrete Forms	\$ 1,000
2.	Concrete- Labor and Materials	\$ 6,500
3.	Miscellaneous Materials- Shooting Benches and Shelter Roof	<u>\$ 5,100</u>
1.	Total Project Budget	\$12,600
2.	Total Funding Requested from FWP	\$ 6,300

10. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

None

Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
N/A		

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$6,300

11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:

The LCSC is a public, non-profit range with no day use or annual membership fees. The range is open to visitors at no charge, though visitors are required to attend orientation training prior to using the range for the first time. Several organizations use the range each year, including the American Trap Shooting Association, Scholastic Clay Trap Shooting Program, Mary Kay Shoot for Pink Group, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Big Bore Safari Rifle Challenge Group, Libby Archery Club, Lincoln County Sheriff's Department, and the Libby Police Department. In addition, 11 events and various shooting and gun safety classes are held at the range every year.

12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:

The LCSC is a public, nonprofit shooting range. Lincoln County held public meetings to seek public involvement in the planning process. Proposed range development proposals have been discussed with the club members, the public, and the associated project vendors and contractors.

13. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

14. Names, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Alan Gerstenecker, P.O. Box 537, Libby, MT 59923; (618) 593-3932.

15. Other Pertinent Information:

The LCSC is a public, non-profit shooting range. The closest shooting range providing similar shooting opportunities is located in Troy, Montana over 20 miles from the LCSC.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: December 17, 2019.

PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

Alternative A, the Proposed Alternative, and Alternative B, the No Action Alternative, were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project): to construct 12 new 100-yard rifle shooting bays with benches. There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative**.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active shooting range without the proposed improvements. The No Action Alternative would have no significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. The range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: Only the **Proposed Alternative** and the **No Action Alternative** were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

None. Only the **Proposed Alternative** and the **No Action Alternative** were considered. There was no other alternative that were deemed reasonably available, or prudent. Neither the **Proposed Alternative** nor the **No Action Alternative** would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

List and explain proposed mitigating measures (stipulations):

None

PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determine extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmentally sensitive areas.

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		4
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil						

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
quality, stability & moisture				X		7
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		8
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		11

2. & 5. There are no delineated wetlands and no natural water sources within the area proposed for development. No critical wildlife habitat would be affected. Any resident or transient wildlife may temporarily leave the immediate area during construction of the proposed project.

4. The implementation of the proposed project will not change the overall abundance and diversity of plant species within the area. The proposed project occupies a small portion of the property. Due to prior land use, native vegetation has been disturbed in the area of the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project will have a minor impact on native vegetation in the area.

7. The proposed project will cause limited displacement of soils but the developments will not substantially affect geological features or establish new erosion patterns. Soil disruption for this site is localized. Erosion control measures will be in effect and any disturbed areas will be reseeded.

9. This project takes place on federally-owned and controlled property; therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations apply. No historical or archaeological cultural resources have been identified by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) on the proposed project site and the USFS approved the construction of the proposed project. Therefore, it is unlikely that cultural resources would be disturbed by the construction of 12 100-yard shooting targets and benches.

11. The property is already used as a shooting range so the proposed project will have no additional impact on the aesthetics of the property.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		
5. Human health				X		5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

5. The proposed projects would improve the safety for members and the public using the range.

7. The proposed developments will increase shooting opportunities within the community.

PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the projects reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being implemented are already on an existing range or altered areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the

proposed alternative.

The Lincoln County Shooting Complex Proposed Alternative, to improve and expand the shooting facilities of the Lincoln County Shooting Complex, is supported by its members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the Proposed Alternative (A) for the improvements as outlined in Part I, Paragraph 9.

PART V. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? No

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? Individually, the proposed actions have minor impacts. However, it was determined that there are no significant or potentially significant cumulatively impacts. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore, an EIS is not required.

PART VI. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

1. Alan Gerstenecker, P.O. Box 537, Libby, MT 59923; (618) 593-3932.
2. MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

EA prepared by:

Andrea Darling, Darling Natural Resource Consulting, Montana City, MT 59634

Date Completed:

April 27, 2020

Describe public involvement, if any:

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the *The Western News, Libby, MT* and the *Montanian, Libby, MT* announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.